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24252	7590	08/24/2005	EXAMINER	
OSRAM SYLVANIA INC 100 ENDICOTT STREET DANVERS, MA 01923			MAKIYA, DAVID J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2875	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: on Page 10, Line 34, the applicant refers to “coupling element 14” which has the same reference number as the “linear electrodes 14.” The specification will assume that the “coupling element 14” be “coupling element 16.” Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 14 are objected to because of the following informalities: the word “elongate lamps” will be interpreted as “elongated lamps.” Appropriate correction is required.

Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities: the phrase “with in” will be interpreted as “within.” Claim 1 is also objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: “each case two ends” (Claim 1, Lines 2 and 3).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-2, 6, 9-12, 14-15, 17, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Netting (US Patent 2,434,951).

With respect to claim 1, Netting teaches a coupling element 14 for the combining of at least two elongated lamps 10 within each case two ends, the coupling element having a

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continuous receptacle area which is provided for receiving an end of each lamp, which receptacle area comprises a reflector 36 (Column 3, Lines 64-72).

With respect to claim 2, Netting teaches the coupling element which is provided receiving lamps with a tubular lamp vessel, where the receptacle area being adapted to the tubular curvature of the outer side of the lamp vessel to be received (Column 5, Lines 32-36).

With respect to claim 6, Netting teaches the coupling element with the reflector being realized by a reflective area (Column 3, Lines 64-72).

With respect to claim 9, Netting teaches the coupling element with the coupling element being developed as a lamp base (Column 6, Lines 8-9).

With respect to claim 10, Netting teaches the coupling element with the coupling element being provided with electrical contacts 20.

With respect to claim 11, Netting teaches the coupling element with the coupling element being provided with terminals 22 for an electrical power supply voltage.

With respect to claim 12, Netting teaches the coupling element with the coupling element having means 48 for mounting on a lamp carrier.

With respect to claim 14, Netting teaches an illumination system having at least two elongated lamps and at least one coupling element and a respective end of the at least two lamps being arranged in the at least one coupling element.

With respect to claim 15, Netting teaches the illumination system with the end sides of the at least two lamps being arranged within the coupling element as near as possible to one another without touching one another (Column 1, Lines 53+).

With respect to claim 17, Netting teaches the illumination system with the coupling element having a stop (Figure 6), which defines a minimum mutual distance between the end sides of the two lamps.

With respect to claim 20, Netting teaches the illumination system with at least one first lamp being provided with a respective coupling element at its two ends, in which coupling elements is arranged, in turn, a respective end of a second and a third lamp, and the electrodes of the first lamp being connected to the electrodes of the second lamp via the electrical contacts of a coupling element (Column 2, Lines 27-39).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3-5, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Netting in view of Ceglia (US Patent 3,202,814).

With respect to claim 3, Netting teaches the invention disclosed above, but fails to disclose the receptacle area being realized by the inner area of a half-shell. Ceglia teaches the coupling element with the receptacle area being realized by the inner area of a half-shell (Figure 4). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the device of Netting with the teachings of Ceglia because altering the receptacle area allows more light to focus on the shadows at the ends of the tube lamps.

With respect to claim 4, Netting teaches the invention disclosed above, but fails to disclose the receptacle area being realized by a hole in the coupling element. Ceglia teaches the coupling element with the receptacle area being realized by a hole 35 in the coupling element. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the coupling element of Netting with the teachings of Ceglia because altering the receptacle area allows more light to focus on the shadows at the ends of the tube lamps.

With respect to claim 5, Netting teaches the invention disclosed above, but fails to disclose the receptacle area being realized by the inner area of a hollow cylinder. Ceglia teaches the coupling element with the receptacle area being realized by the inner area of a hollow cylinder 35. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Netting coupling element with the teachings of Ceglia because altering the receptacle area allows more light to focus on the shadows at the ends of the tube lamps.

With respect to claim 7, Netting teaches the invention disclosed above, but fails to disclose the coupling element with the reflector housing being realized by a diffusely reflective area. Ceglia teaches the coupling element with the reflector being realized by a diffusely reflective area (Column 3, Lines 22-30). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the coupling element of Netting with the teachings of Ceglia because making the housing diffusely reflective allows some light to pass through the housing which provides a broader area of light near the coupling element.

With respect to claim 13, Netting teaches the invention disclosed above, but fails to disclose the coupling element with the coupling element being in two parts. Ceglia teaches the coupling element with the coupling element being in two parts 31. It would have been obvious

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to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the coupling element of Netting with the teachings of Ceglia because making the coupling element into two parts allows for easier manufacturing and assembly of the electrical components.

Claims 8 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Netting.

With respect to claim 8, Netting teaches the coupling element with the reflector but does not disclose the coupling element being realized by a reflective foil arranged on the receptacle area. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use a reflective foil because a foil has a high index of refraction that would easily disperse light.

With respect to claim 16, Netting teaches the illumination system except for the end sides of the at least two lamps being arranged within the coupling element with a mutual distance of approximately $a=1\text{mm}$. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the mutual distance between the lamps to 1 mm, since it has been held by the courts that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device, and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device. *In Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984),

Claims 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Netting in view of the applicant's admitted prior art.

With respect to claim 18, Netting teaches the illumination system above, but fails to teach the system with the at least two lamps being aperture lamps. By the applicant's own admission, Page 1, Lines 16-20, it is conventional to one of ordinary skill in the art to use aperture lamps. It

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would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the illumination system in the Netting teachings with aperture lamps because aperture lamps concentrate light in a directed region.

With respect to claim 19, Netting teaches the illumination system except at least two lamps being dielectrically impeded discharge lamps. By the applicant's own admission, Page 9, Lines 19-27, it is conventional to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a dielectrically impeded discharge lamp (US Patent 6,605,899). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the illumination system in the Netting teachings with dielectrically impeded discharge lamps because this minimizes the amount of dark areas created by the lamps.

Conclusion


The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Berlinghof et al. (US Patent 6,605,899) teaches a dielectric barrier discharge lamp. Wilson (US Patent 6,224,237) teaches the use of an aperture lamp. Cetrone (US Patent 4,712,165) teaches a lighting system using pipes and fittings as coupling elements. Entrop et al. (US Patent 5,357,412) teaches a device that mounts two tube lamps and an additional lamp for end illumination.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David J. Makiya whose telephone number is (571) 272-2273. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:30am - 4:00pm (ET). The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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DJM 8/18/2005


RENEE LUEBKE
PRIMARY EXAMINER